

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A lever apparatus for a vehicle comprising:

a lever;

a cover part disposed on a base end portion of the lever, which includes a spherical-shaped outer surface and a thickness-reducing recessed portion formed on an inner surface side thereof;

a mounting part fixedly projecting from the inner surface of the cover part, the mounting part and the lever formed monolithically;

a pair of fitting recessed portions formed in opposed side portions of the mounting part outside of the cover part; and

a lever support portion including a pair of shaft portions with which the pair of fitting recessed portions are respectively fitted such that the lever is pivotably connected to the lever support portion,

wherein the thickness-reducing recessed portion of the cover part includes reinforcing ribs.

Claim 2 (Original): The lever apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a pair of openings are respectively formed in peripheries of the associated shaft portions.

Claim 3 (Original): The lever apparatus according to claim 2, wherein an inserting opening to which the mounting part is inserted is formed in the lever support portion, and the pair of shaft portions project toward the inserting opening.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The lever apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the lever support portion is configured such that when the mounting part is inserted into the lever support portion, the pair of shaft portions abut to the mounting part and wherein the shaft portions are able to be elastically deformed.

Claim 5 (Canceled).

Claim 6 (Withdrawn): A method for manufacturing a lever unit for a vehicle including a lever, a cover part disposed on a base end portion of the lever which includes a spherical-shaped outer surface and a thickness-reducing recessed portion formed on an inner surface side thereof, a mounting part fixedly projecting from the inner surface of the cover part, and a pair of fitting recessed portions formed in opposed side portions of the mounting part outside of the cover part, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a mold having a first mold part corresponding to an outside surface portion of the cover part, a second mold part corresponding to the thickness-reducing recessed portions and mounting portions, and third mold parts inserted through the second mold part at locations

corresponding to the first recessed portions;

disposing a material into the mold to mold the lever unit;

removing the third mold parts from the second mold part and the lever unit;

removing the first mold part from the lever unit; and

removing the second mold part from the lever unit.

Claim 7 (Withdrawn): The method for manufacturing a lever unit for a vehicle of claim 6, wherein

the second mold part is removed by sliding in an axial direction with respect to the mounting portion.

Claim 8 (Withdrawn): The method for manufacturing a lever unit for a vehicle of claim 6, wherein

the third mold parts are removed by sliding in a radial direction with respect to the mounting portion.

Claim 9 (Withdrawn): The method for manufacturing a lever unit for a vehicle of claim 6, wherein the mounting part and the lever are formed monolithically.

Claim 10 (Withdrawn): The method for manufacturing a lever unit for a vehicle of claim 6, wherein

the second mold part is configured to create reinforcing ribs disposed on one or more inner side portions of the cover part.